

COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, INC.
THE HAROLD PRATT HOUSE 58 EAST 68TH STREET
NEW YORK 21, N. Y.

April 10, 1952

Dear Allen:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter to Mr. Joseph Johnson from one of his friends in the United States Army in Europe. Whether or not you agree with it, I believe you will feel that it is interesting and provocative, and that it raises important issues which should be discussed further at this time.

We are asking a small group of Council members to meet here for this purpose at 6:00 on Tuesday, April 29th. Mr. Grayson Kirk will act as chairman, and Mr. Hanson Baldwin will lead off the discussion. The principal theses of the letter may be summarized as follows, though a summary is necessarily quite inadequate to convey the flavor of the original:

1. Our present policy in Europe is - or was - based on the theory that we could make ourselves strong enough so that the Russians would be forced "to make the best peaceful bargain they could" with us.
2. The unexpected strengthening of Russia's atomic situation, plus the inability of Europe to revive her military strength as anticipated, make it unlikely that we can "develop preponderant force, which will defeat Russia without being employed."
3. "The Russian leadership does not desire open war...with a powerful United States, and...will seek to avoid...war so long as its regime does not otherwise appear doomed by a fruition of hostile preparation."
4. The Russian leadership has a genuine fear of U. S. intentions.
5. The best way to avoid war is to abate Russia's fear by moderating our own military preparations. In doing this it is important not to "go so far or so fast as to suggest that Russia might engage in open aggression with prospects of a victory the Kremlin regime could survive to exploit." Also we must make it clear to Russia that if she attacks any of our allies, she will be at war with us also.
6. "The NATO effort in Europe might be about halved," whereas the goals of our rearmament effort at home should be reduced by something like a quarter.

As indicated above, the meeting on the 29th will begin at 6:00. Dinner will be at 7:15, and we shall adjourn about ten.

I hope you will be able to be present. Please let me know.

Sincerely yours,

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George S. Franklin, Jr.
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Assistant Executive Director